



NEWS RELEASE

MAYOR CHRIS BEUTLER



LINCOLN-LANCASTER COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

3140 N Street, Lincoln NE 68510 • Phone: (402) 441-8000

Fax: (402) 441-6229

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 29, 2011
FOR MORE INFORMATION: Mike Heyl, 402-441-3889
Julie Anderson, 402-441-8071
Charlotte Burke, 402-441-8011

HEAT ADVISORY ALERT

The extended forecast for temperatures to reach into the upper ninety degree range has placed the City of Lincoln into a hot weather alert. These temperatures, combined with extremely high relative humidity levels, will make work and play outside dangerous and possibly life-threatening for young children, older adults, and people with chronic illnesses such as respiratory disease and heart conditions.

The Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department encourages everyone to become familiar with the signs of heat-related illness and to practice preventive measures to reduce their chance for heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke.

“People suffer heat-related illness when the body’s temperature rises and precautions are not taken to prevent it,” said Mike Heyl, a Health Educator with the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department. With so many outdoor activities taking place during this heat advisory, basic preventive measures should be followed. These measures include:

- Drink plenty of water. Individuals should increase their fluid intake by drinking 2-4 eight ounce glasses of water each hour during strenuous physical activity.
- Stay out of the direct heat of the sun as much as possible and stay in a cool environment whenever possible. Avoid being outside during the peak sun hours of 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. each day. Schedule outdoor activity carefully.
- Wear appropriate clothing and sun screen. Choose light-weight, loose-fitting, light-colored clothing and wear a broad-brimmed hat to shade the head. Select a sun screen SPF of 30 or more to protect your skin from the sun. Apply the sun screen a half hour before going outside.

-more-

June 29, 2011
Heat Advisory Alert

- Infants and children are susceptible to dehydration and especially at risk during times of high heat and humidity. Be sure they drink plenty of fluids - especially water, stay in a cool place, wear loose-fitting light-weight clothing, and avoid direct sun exposure.
- Never leave children in a vehicle with the windows rolled up. Children's body temperature rises 3 to 5 times more rapidly than an adult's body temperature in a car with the windows rolled up.
- Adjust to the environment slowly, pace your physical activity, STOP any activity and get into a cool area away from the direct heat of the sun if you become lightheaded, confused, weak, or faint.
- Avoid alcohol and caffeine as these promote fluid loss.
- If you do not have air conditioning or a cool place to be, consider going to a library, a movie theater, shopping mall, or other air-conditioned public location.
- Pets are also at risk during times of high heat and humidity. Pets who spend their days outdoors need a consistent supply of fresh water and plenty of shade. When possible during the hottest part of the day, bring pets into a cooler environment. Never leave pets in a car with the windows rolled up.

"Sweating is the body's natural mechanism to control body temperature. Under some conditions, sweating is not enough to cool the body, causing a person's body temperature to rise rapidly," says Judy Halstead, Health Director. "Both air temperature and humidity affect the body's ability to cool itself during hot weather. When the humidity is high, sweat will not evaporate as quickly, thus preventing the body from releasing heat efficiently," Halstead added.

Symptoms of heat stress include clammy, sweaty skin, light-headedness, weakness, and nausea. Victims of heat exhaustion should be treated by moving them to a cooler area and by removing restrictive clothing. If conscious, individuals with heat exhaustion can be given cold water to drink. Salt tablets, unless under a doctor's orders, should be avoided. Plenty of rest will help the victim.

Heat Stroke is a more serious condition and should be treated as a medical emergency. Symptoms include hot skin, body temperatures above 103 degrees Fahrenheit, rapid breathing and pulse, incoherent behavior, mental confusion, convulsions, or unconsciousness. Victims of heat stroke need to be moved to a cool place and medical assistance must be summoned immediately.